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REVIEWS.

PROFESSOR CHILD'S TRANSLATION OF "BEOWULF."

BEOWULF AND THE FINNISBURGH FRAGMENT. Translated from the Old English, with an Introductory Sketch and Notes. By Clarence Griffin Child, Assistant Professor of English in the University of Pennsylvania. The Riverside Literature Series, No. 159. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

How piquant and bold—and how justifiable!—to offer a translation of the Anglo-Saxon epic, "Beowulf," to the public for fifteen cents in paper or, by paying ten cents more, bound well in cloth. This is what the editors of the Riverside Literature Series have done, aided by the scholarship of Professor Clarence G. Child, of the University of Pennsylvania.

Professor Child's version is in prose, but a prose infused with poetic traits. How can it be otherwise, when one with Saxon blood in him touches the old national material! To Saxons, "Beowulf" has proved very attractive in the last quarter of a century. In America, Garnett, Lesslie Hall, Tinker, and now Child, have translated the poem; in England, Earle, Clark Hall, and the poet William Morris, assisted by the English editor of "Beowulf," Wyatt. A cheap yet faithful version like this, with strong literary flavor, will conduce not only to a wider knowledge of the poem, but to a study of the epic genus in our English literature in the development from the epic of growth to the great epic that is made—from "Beowulf" with the "Ballads" and "Morte D'Arthur" to the "Canterbury Tales" and thence to the "Faërie Queene" and "Paradise Lost." Even translations of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" and the "Divine Comedy," not to name the European mediæval epics—for example, the "Song of Roland" in this same series—if not versions in the original tongues, may, in such a process, be brought in for comparison.

In regard to the version before us, Professor Child has succeeded in making an exceedingly good translation of "Beowulf." The translation has several advantages over previous attempts in that it avoids the excessive use of archaic words

and the stilted and cumbrous turns of expression commonly employed, and combines with the latest scholarly researches a certain literary quality which is rare in work of this character.

It is a difficult thing to make a book which will appeal to the scholar and to the general reader as well, but in this instance the translator seems to have skillfully and successfully steered this middle course. Much light has been thrown on dark passages and disputed points, but none save the specialist will know that the translator was confronted with any obscurities or difficulties. The reader will be pleased with the clear, straightforward, vigorous prose narrative; and the student will be grateful for the succinct history of the poem given in the introduction and the close rendering of the original. We have no hesitancy in claiming for this translation a high place among works of its kind.

J. B. H. AND L. W. P., JR.

AN OFFICIAL LIFE OF ZOLA.

EMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER. An Account of His Life and Work. By Ernest Alfred Vizetelly. Illustrated by Portraits, Views, and Fac-similes. John Lane: The Bodley Head, London and New York. MDCCCIV. Pp. xiv, 560.

This is an interesting and in many ways a notable work—not so much as a biography or a criticism, but as a setting forth of many details in Zola's life hitherto not generally known, and as a portrayal of the unity of purpose and endeavor in a singularly marked life. In that career some four episodes stand out as particularly prominent: the formative influences and emotions of Zola's youth in and around Aix, in Provence, in Southern France, where his father was a noted engineer; the exposition of the principles of "naturalism" in literature and the planning and carrying out, through years of laborious work, of the Rougon-Macquart Series; the persecution of the elder Vizetelly, the father of the author of this volume, for publishing and selling Zola's works in London; and Zola's interjection of self into the discussions of the Dreyfus case and his courageous and patriotic stand in the celebrated "I accuse" open letter.

The reader feels that the author of this biography writes with the fervor of an apostle, who has suffered with and for his au-